**\*\*1. Why are you interested in programming? What have you done to expose yourself to programming so far?\*\***

In sales, I’ve excelled at understanding technical products and discussing not just the features and benefits, but the UI and ideas on how to improve the overall experience. Moreover, thinking through various outcomes and solutions is something I enjoy. I frequently find myself partnering with my company’s product teams to discuss potential solutions and the ‘next thing’. I have several standing invites to our product manager’s sprint reviews and it’s \_*fun­\_.* I’m able to help clarify epics or stories and get customer insight for them more quickly. I love this aspect of my current job and that enjoyment and fulfillment is a clear signal that a change to something more product oriented would be a better match. To ensure my fascination was really with programming and that it’s not fleeting, I’ve taken several courses from CodeAcademy over the last year. I’ve also asked several friends and colleagues in the CS/IT world to lunch or coffee for informational meetings, to learn more about the tech industry, their position, why they love what they do (or don’t) and to ask them advice if I wanted to pursue something similar.

**\*\*2. What are your professional goals for the next 2 years, the next 5 years?\*\***

Over the next two years, I’d like to make a jump from the sales to software development field and become established at a medium-to-large sized company. The first step is applying to, being accepted, and completing a professional bootcamp! I would very much like that to be ADA, because of the inclusivity, minority focus, support network, and internship prospects! However, regardless, I’ve set a deadline for myself: By 2017 I will be \_*working in*­\_ the technology industry not as a sales professional, but as a developer. After securing an internship and then full-time position in the Seattle area, I’d like to get settled with a team and begin taking stretch assignments. At the end of two years, I’d like to be poised as a prime team-lead candidate. Within three years of becoming a team-lead, I’d like to take on increasing levels of responsibility, perhaps becoming a product owner/manager and interfacing with a wider variety of departments or being charged with greater responsibility (i.e. larger team or more high-profile projects). Regardless of my path, I want to continue coding and build on my current skills surrounding management, coaching, talent acquisition and retention.

**\*\*3. Tell us about a time you made a mistake that you learned a lot from. If you encountered the situation again, what would you do differently?\*\***

When interfacing with multiple divisions, yet wherein none of those employees report to you, there can sometimes be tension. People don’t know you and in sales, they can be especially protective of their business. When I was a product specialist at Pearson Education, I assumed that people would want my help and that they’d be open to my feedback. Yet I couldn’t have been more wrong. They didn’t know me and it didn’t matter how much I knew or how intelligently I could talk about the product, they just wanted me to listen. And I didn’t. I made the mistake of not listening. If I encountered a similar situation again, I would know that there’s more power and gain to be had by knowing when to be quiet. That relationships trump knowledge almost all the time, and that you don’t always have to be an active or vocal player, to accomplish goals.

**\*\*4. Have you taught yourself anything before? Describe what you learned and how you approached it.\*\***

I taught myself perseverance. I wanted to be the first woman in my family to graduate high school and the first person to attend a University. I learned through trial and error, I asked questions, I put 120% into achieving my goals, and committed to a course of action. For instance, instead of attending a local high school rife with drugs and gangs, I tested into a better institution and took public transportation, then biked thirty minutes to get there. I did Running Start by taking a zero hour, going to my part-time job afterwards, and then taking night classes at the local college. I also pursued an International Baccalaureate degree concurrently, even though my family didn’t understand. I graduated early from Gonzaga after my father was diagnosed with terminal cancer and when one of his surgeries had an 80% mortality rate, I researched alternatives and convinced him to go another route. I learned to always search for solutions, for answers, and to \_*persist*\_ – because time is finite. It’s my life, why not do something I find worthwhile? I taught myself that gumption trumps base-and-unused talent and that there’s always a path forward, you just need to find it.